

CONSTANTINE BROWN

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Friction Between U.S. and France

Split is Traced to Divergence in Views As to the Makeup of the Future Europe

PARIS—What is causing the present ugly situation between the United States and France? From the day when Lafayette landed in America until we returned the call in 1917 relations between the two great democracies were seldom marred.

There were minor frictions after the two world wars. But never have there been strains such as exist today. There are no longer diplomatic misunderstandings but an actual cleavage between the political philosophies regarding Europe of President Kennedy and De Gaulle.

True, Gen. de Gaulle did not enjoy Washington's confidence even during the days when he raised the standard of rebellion against the Pétain government and became the head of Free France. Neither did he trust Washington. It was with a sigh of relief that our political leaders saw him go into eclipse in 1946. His return to power in 1958 was regarded by many Washington pundits as the end of French democracy.

But France was a key member of the NATO and the White House and State Department decided to deal gingerly with the "grandiose Frenchman."

The encounter between President Kennedy and Gen. de Gaulle soon after the American Chief Executive began his round of official visits was pleasant. Mr. Kennedy was impressed with the loftiness and highmindedness of the Frenchman, while Gen. de Gaulle is reputed to have observed that "there is much good in that young man."

Mr. Kennedy was particularly impressed by the determination of the French leader to give Algeria to the Algerians in the face of opposition, particularly from the armed forces. This incident, which did not directly involve our Chief Executive, occurred. When it was organized by Gen. de Gaulle and Salan took place, it was rumblings that it was supported by certain elements of the American government presumably the

Gen. Salan. His attorney, Jean Tixier-Vignancour, dropped a bombshell when he told the court that Gen. Challe, now serving a life sentence, had received visitors "from representatives of a foreign power, the United States of America, an ally of France but hostile to Prime Minister Debre, promising assistance for the coup d'etat which was to overthrow the government."

Mr. Vignancour had demanded that Gen. Challe be permitted to testify in the Salan case and be cross-examined. The high tribunal refused, lest it have major repercussions.

The French lawyer substituted the name of Premier Debre for that of Gen. de Gaulle. But it is no longer a secret in Paris that during his examination by the French magistrate, Gen. Challe had stated that he had been encouraged by "American agents" in his attempts to overthrow Gen. de Gaulle.

To what extent Gen. de Gaulle believed the report brought to him by the Minister of Justice is not known. But those close to the French President say this was a contributing factor to his recent coolness toward the Washington administration.

The fundamental reason, however, for the friction which undeniably exists today between the two governments is to be found in our assistance on directing the shape of the future unity of Western Europe. This is considered by those in the know

as more important than our refusal to help France in its effort to become a nuclear power.

Gen. de Gaulle, supported by Chancellor Adenauer, wants to create a European confederation—Europe of the fatherlands. That is to say, a union of the European countries which belong at present to the Common Market in which every member will maintain its full individuality and independence. This confederation, in Gen. de Gaulle's plans, will be supervised by a supreme council in which Germany and France—especially France—will play a leading role.

The planners in the White House and State Department favor a federation in which all members will become states such as in the United States. Presently our policy makers are using all available means to put pressure on Bonn, Paris, Rome and the Benelux countries to bring Britain into the Federation. Gen. de Gaulle fears that once Britain enters the combine she will try, with Washington's support, to break up the European unity and make it a hodge podge of nations.

He also is adamant against a federation, believing this is the first step toward the ideologies of the American "liberals" for One World, and a One World Government, directed eventually by the United Nations.

Thus Gen. de Gaulle resents the pressures from Washington to bring Britain, "the well known trouble maker who believes in balance of power, regardless of how balance is achieved," into the body politic of Europe.